

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 121  
By Hood

A RESOLUTION urging the Secretary of State to include the official State declamation "I AM TENNESSEE" by Major Hooper Penuel in the next and subsequent printings of the *Tennessee Blue Book*.

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the elected representatives of the State of Tennessee should honor those Tennesseans who, through their intense patriotism and pride, have penned works of art that have become official symbols of our State; and

WHEREAS, Major Hooper Penuel is one such individual, who through his beautiful declamation, "I AM TENNESSEE", has captured the beauty, history, and spirit of our State; and

WHEREAS, a true Tennessee Volunteer, Major Penuel, the Public Affairs Officer and chief spokesman for the Tennessee National Guard, retired as Lieutenant Colonel in 1998 after more than 28 years of combined active duty and guard service; and

WHEREAS, this touching tribute, designated by House Joint Resolution 171 of the 95th General Assembly as the official declamation of the State, reads as follows:

**I AM TENNESSEE**

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By Major Hooper Penuel

My name came from Tanasie, the name of an Indian Cherokee village in the region. Early explorers once passed over and through my mountains and forests. Europeans fought to decide who would own me.

I AM TENNESSEE.

Pioneers from the east crossed my mountains to settle in the wilderness. They formed their own governments in my region before any other independent governments existed in North America.

I AM TENNESSEE.

Those pioneers brought with them the spirit of independence and daring that has become part of my history. I gained statehood on June 1st, 1796. President George Washington signed the bill that made me the sixteenth state of the union. John Sevier was my first Governor. My first United States Senators were William Blount and William Cocke. At this time my only seat in the House of Representatives was held by Andrew Jackson.

I AM TENNESSEE.

My boundaries range from the mountains of North Carolina to Arkansas in the west. I link the north with the south. I was the last state to leave the union, and the first to return. I touch eight states, more than any other state in the union.

I AM TENNESSEE.

Tennesseans like John Sevier in the Revolutionary War, Andrew Jackson in the War of 1812, and Alvin C. York in World War I, established a military tradition of honor and bravery that continues to this day.

I AM TENNESSEE.

I felt more battles on my soil than any other state except Virginia, my neighbor to the east. I have produced three Presidents; Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson. All distinguished themselves in that true Tennessee tradition.

I AM TENNESSEE.

Two of my early residents - Davy Crockett and Sam Houston - became heroes of the Texas Revolution. Each carried the true Tennessee Volunteer spirit. I'm known worldwide as the Volunteer State. John Sevier called for 100 good men. 200 answered the call. For this I will always be grateful.

Today, we have 19,000 Guard men and women serving as volunteers in the Tennessee National Guard, once known as the Militia. Each one is ready to answer the call of the Governor or the President to defend this great land.

I AM TENNESSEE.

My land is rich with rugged mountains and thick forests in the eastern and central region. It produces excellent recreation for hunters, campers and sightseers. The majestic beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains attracts 6 million visitors every year. My lakes and rivers provide excellent boating and fishing or just for relaxing.

I AM TENNESSEE.

My fertile soil, thick forests, temperate climate, water supply and an abundance in minerals makes my state rich in natural resources. Manufacturing, agriculture and mining are all important parts of my makeup. TVA generates my electricity. Early in my history, between 1800 and 1860, private companies built turnpikes and collected tolls to keep them up. In 1913 my leaders passed legislation to construct major highways. Today I have over 8,000 miles of highways and roads. I have about 125 airports, almost 6,000 miles of track for trains, and barges float my major rivers, The Cumberland, The Mississippi and The Tennessee.

I AM TENNESSEE.

My music is heard around the world. Jazz from the Memphis Delta, Country from Nashville, and the unique sound of the dulcimer from Appalachia.

Yes, my history is a proud one. From my early beginnings as an unsettled territory until today as a leader and a state that looks toward the future.

I AM TENNESSEE.

Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville and the Capitol City of Nashville are my largest cities, but I couldn't survive without the 3,000 communities and the 95 counties in-between. From the delta river banks of Memphis to Bristol, and from Frog Mountain near Copperhill to the Reelfoot Lake near Tiptonville, 4.6 million residents keep me going.

I AM TENNESSEE.

For almost two centuries I have held my own. My future looks bright. I am a great place in which to live. I am a Volunteer.

I AM TENNESSEE.

WHEREAS, as the official State declamation, it should be included in the next and subsequent printings of the *Tennessee Blue Book*; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Major Hooper Penuel for his efforts and urge the Secretary of State to include the official State declamation, "I AM TENNESSEE", in the next and subsequent printings of the *Tennessee Blue Book*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of State with this final clause omitted from such copy.